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USE OF ELECTRONIC SECURITY SYSTEMS IN THE SECURITY OF INFORMATION RESOURCES IN FEDERAL UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES IN SOUTHERN NIGERIA

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Abstract

The paper was on use of electronic security systems in the security of information resources in Federal University Libraries in Southern Nigeria. This study adopted descriptive survey research design. The population comprised of one hundred and eleven (111) academic Librarians drawn from the Seven University Libraries that use the electronic security systems. The Universities are University of Benin, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, University of Port Harcourt, Federal University of Technology, Akure, University of Lagos, Federal University of Agriculture, Umudike and University of Nigeria, Nsukka. The instruments used for the data collection were observation checklist and structured questionnaire. The data obtained were analyzed using Descriptive statistics. The major findings include that the available electronic security systems in these libraries are not in regular use while in University of Nigeria Nsukka, their available electronic security systems are no longer in use. The findings also revealed that RFID (Radio Frequency Identification System) is not in use in any of these Federal University Libraries. Main reasons identified as being responsible for the occasional use of electronic security systems include poor maintenance, inadequate funding and incessant power supply.

Keywords: Electronic security systems, Information resources, Use and Libraries.

Introduction

Library services can only be achieved if security threats to information resources in libraries are curbed. How to curb these threats has been a thorn on librarians flesh. So many manual security control measures like stop and search by porters, leaving bags with the porters, using security men inside the library, have been employed to reduce threats to information resources, yet the rate of occurrence is still alarming (Osayande, 2011). Above all, library users and staff end up being hurt due to the manual control measures adopted in some libraries. This mostly occur during the stop and search method of security check, some security personnel use that opportunity to get back at users and staff that offended them, some of them end up spoiling users belongings all in the name of searching, this is against the objective of the library. McComb (2004) asserted that the goal of a security system should be to provide safe and secure facilities for library employees, library resources, equipments and library patrons. He further stated that it is equally important to ensure that the security is performed as seamlessly as possible, without interfering with the library's objective of providing a user friendly environment.

We are highly blessed to be in the digital society where reliable machines can help us achieve our goals when it comes to security of library resources. The usefulness of electronic security systems cannot be overemphasized. Their regular use can help control the unethical practices in libraries. Electronic security systems are devices that are used with the aid of electrical apparatus to secure library materials, they also help libraries to control, minimize or avoid library materials theft and unethical losses (Rajendran & Rathinasabapathy, 2007). Examples of electronic security systems installed in libraries are: electronic surveillance camera (CCTV), 3M Electronic security systems (Electronic security gates), Radio frequency

Identification (RFID), Perimeter alarm system, Smoke detection system, and Movement detectors.

There is no point expending millions of naira or hard currencies on new acquisition of information resources without the procurement of electronic security systems to secure them. Nwogu and Anunobi (2002), agree with this recent trend in crime prevention by adding that studies in developed countries have shown that spending on installing electronic security systems in academic libraries is not as high as losses through times. Therefore, academic libraries should consider as matter of priority the installation and regular use of such systems.

Statement of the Problem

The various services provided in libraries are complimented by available information resources. These resources are provided in academic libraries as major requirement to enhance teaching and learning. However, it is one thing to provide information resources and yet another thing for these resources to continue to be available and their contents intact to achieve the purpose of their provision. Literature on library security such as Osayande (2009), Edewor and Ojohwoh (2010), and Ogbonyomi (2011), revealed that academic libraries are bedeviled with many security threats which have resulted in high depletion of information resources. The security threats include: misuse of library's internet, theft of library materials and patron's belongings, book mutilation, tearing of filed catalogue cards, defacement of library resources and building, vandalism, arson, delinquent/ illegal borrowers, deliberately mis-shelving (hiding) of library books, and physical abuse on both staff and users. Due to the rising incidence of these threats, libraries are suffering serious loss of books and other library properties (Cudddy & Marchok, 2003).

These threats if not checked will lead to serious drought of information resources which results in poor library service delivery.

There are electronic security control measures which are used in libraries to curb these threats. According to Omoniyi (2001), libraries have been advised to apply the Installation of electronic security systems such as 3M Library Security System (Electronic gates), Closed-Circuit Television (CCTV), Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) System, Perimeter Alarm System, Fire Alarm System, to prevent library materials and other resources from being stolen or damaged. These electronic security Systems are being installed by the academic libraries, but studies according to Osayande (2011), Uzuegbu and Okoro (2012) have shown that security threats to information resources is still on the increase in Nigerian University Libraries, even in the Libraries that deployed the Electronic Security Systems which makes the researcher to wonder if the Electronic Security Systems installed in Nigerian University libraries are actually in use or maybe the electronic security systems are not reliable. The concern of this study therefore is to determine the use of electronic security systems in the security of information resources in Southern Nigeria Federal Universities' libraries.

Purpose of the study

The specifics objectives are:

1. To find out the different electronic security systems installed in the Federal University libraries in Southern Nigeria.

2. To ascertain the use of electronic security systems in Federal University libraries under study.
3. To determine the challenges to the use of electronic security systems in the academic libraries under study.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What are the electronic security systems available in Federal University libraries in Southern Nigeria?
2. How often is electronic security systems used in Federal University libraries in Southern Nigeria?
3. What are the challenges to the use of electronic security systems in Federal University libraries in Southern Nigeria?

Methodology

A descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. This study was carried out only in Federal University libraries in Southern Nigeria. The sample for the study comprised one hundred and eleven (111) librarians drawn from the seven Federal Universities. Purposive sampling technique was used to select seven federal Universities from Southern Nigeria. The instruments used for the collection of data were observation checklist and structured questionnaire. The data obtained for this study were presented based on the research questions that guided the study and descriptive statistics was used to analyze the data.

Results and Discussion

The results from data analysis are presented below

Table 1: Types of Electronic security systems (Ess) available in the seven Federal University libraries

S/ N	ESS	UNIBE N	OA U	UNIPOR T	FUT A	UNILA G	MOU A	UN N
1	CCTV	YES	YES	YES	YES	NO	YES	YES
2	RFID	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO
3	Electroni c gates	NO	NO	NO	NO	YES	NO	YES
4	Smoke detectors	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
5	Fire Alarm	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
6	Metal Detectors	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO
7	Perimeter Alarm	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO

The observation checklist shows that the seven Universities under study have an electronic security system installed in their libraries. It was also revealed that none of the University libraries has RFID (Radio Frequency Identification System), Metal detectors and Perimeter alarm system.

The findings revealed that out of the seven electronic security systems listed, three were installed by almost all the seven Universities under study, they are: CCTV,

Fire alarm system and Smoke detectors. While the electronic gates were installed by only two Universities, which are University of Lagos (UNILAG) and University of Nigeria Nsukka (UNN).

Table 2. Mean (x) scores of the Responses of Librarians in Federal University Libraries on the Frequency of Use of Electronic Security Systems.

Electronic security systems	Mean	Remarks
1. CCTV	2.65	Often
2. RFID	1.41	Never
3. Electronic gates	1.76	Occasionally
4. Smoke detectors	2.27	Occasionally
5. Fire alarm	2.79	Often
6. Metal detectors	1.65	Occasionally
7. Perimeter alarm system	1.50	Occasionally
Overall Mean	2.00	Occasionally

The overall mean response of 2.00 in table 1 shows that librarians are of the view that federal university libraries use electronic security systems occasionally. The item by item analysis shows that two out of the seven electronic security systems listed two were used often, namely Fire alarm (mean=2.79) and CCTV (mean=2.65). Four of the electronic security devices were used occasionally, these are; Smoke detectors (mean=2.27), electronic gates (mean=1.76), Metal detectors (mean=1.65) and Perimeter alarm system (mean=1.50) while only one, RFID (mean=1.41), was never used in the Federal University libraries in Southern Nigerian. However, from the respondent's indication, it shows that their available electronic security systems are not used on regular bases.

Table 3. Mean (x) scores of the Responses of Librarians in Federal University libraries on the Challenges to the use of Electronic Security Systems

Items	N	Mean	Remarks
1. There is inadequate funding to support the electronic security systems	111	3.29	Agree
2. Lack of University management attention on the security needs	111	2.81	Agree
3. The electronic security systems are not in regular use due to power outage	111	3.08	Agree
4. Fear of reduction in staff by the library management	111	2.40	Disagree
5. Inadequate competent personnel to handle the electronic security system	111	2.46	Disagree
6. The electronic security systems are not used due to the privacy invasion of library staff and users	111	2.29	Disagree
7. System failure or downtime	111	2.75	Agree
8. Poor maintenance	111	2.63	Agree
Overall Mean	111	2.71	Agree

As shown by the means in table 3, five out of eight challenges listed were accepted as challenges to the use of electronic security systems in Federal University Libraries in southern Nigeria. These five challenges are: inadequate funding to support the electronic security systems (mean=3.29), the electronic security systems are not in regular use due to power outage (mean=3.08), the electronic security systems are not used due to the privacy invasion of library staff and users (mean=2.29), lack of university management attention on the security needs of the

library (mean= 2.81), system failure or downtime (mean=2.75) and Poor maintenance (mean=2.63). While they disagree to the following as challenges to the use of electronic security systems in academic libraries: fear of reduction in staff by the library management (mean=2.40), inadequate competent personnel to handle the electronic security system (mean=2.46) and non-utilization of electronic security system due to privacy (mean=2.29)

Discussion of Findings

It has empirically proven that many Federal Universities in Southern Nigeria have not deployed the use of electronic security systems. The few Federal Universities that are making use of it do not use it on regular bases.

There are various challenges to the regular use of these electronic security systems. These challenges include; inadequate funding to support the electronic security systems, lack of University management attention on the security needs of the library, power outage, system failure or downtime, and Poor maintenance. The finding is in line with the observations of (Ogunsola, 2004) that many Nigerian libraries, especially academic libraries face various problems in their attempt to modernize their security operations.

Conclusion

The electronic security systems have helped seriously in the reduction of security threats to information resources in the libraries under study, only that they are not used on regular bases while in some of the libraries they are no longer in use due to so many challenges. If only our libraries could overcome the challenges to the use of the electronic security systems, some of which are inadequate funding to maintain these systems and power outage, threats to information resources in the libraries will be a thing of the past.

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